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absence for research in Europe. Professor Fullerton never intended to retain the Vice-Provostship of the University, and only accepted the position while the University was being reorganized after the election of Provost Harrison.

PRESIDENT ANDREW S. DRAPER, of the University of Illinois, having declined the Superintendency of the schools of New York City, Dr. W. H. Maxwell, Superintendent of the Brooklyn schools, was elected Superintendent on March 15th.

Of the three travelling fellowships annually awarded at Bryn Mawr College, two have been awarded in the sciences—the President's fellowship to Miss L. R. Laird, a student of physics, and the Mary E. Garrett European fellowship to Miss F. Peebles, a student of biology.

MR. D. E. O. LOVITT has been elected assistant professor of mathematics in the John C. Green School of Science, of Princeton University.

PROFESSOR P. HENSEL, Strassburg, has been called to an assistant professorship of philosophy newly established at Heidelberg.

DR. GEORGE TREILLE has been appointed to the newly established chair of colonial hygiene in the University of Brussels.

THE University of Göttingen will again this year offer, during the Easter holidays, courses in science for teachers. No charge is made for attendance on these courses.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE LONGEVITY OF SCIENTIFIC MEN.

PROFESSOR EDWARD S. HOLDEN contributes to the last number of the *Cosmopolitan* an article 'On the Choice of a Profession: Science 'intended to be' of distinct use to young men and women of the *Cosmopolitan* University.' In the course of the article occurs the following:

Among the advantages of following science as a profession we must certainly reckon its undoubted tendency to prolong the lives of its votaries. It is not a little remarkable that men of science, astronomers among them, are particularly long lived. The average longevity of men is about thirty-three years. Some one has had the patience to determine the aver-

age age of some seventeen hundred astronomers and mathematicians, and it turns out to be sixty-four years! That is, astronomers live nearly twice as long as men in general. \* \* \* I think no one can fail to be surprised at the foregoing statistics.

Professor Holden is certainly right as to the surprise likely to be awakened by these statistics. An exclamation mark or a question mark would perhaps be sufficient comment for scientific men; but for the benefit of the young persons of the *Cosmopolitan* 'University' it may be explained that none of the 1,700 eminent astronomers and mathematicians died when they were infants. We do not know the average age at which work was done that would entitle a man to be included in this list of astronomers and mathematicians, but if it were forty years, we know that the expectation of life for men of that age is (according to tables of the Institute of Actuaries) 27.4 years. The average age at death of ordinary men would then be 67.4 years and of the astronomers and mathematicians, 64 years.

J. MCK. C.

##### THE REVIVAL OF ALCHEMY—A REJOINDER.

IN SCIENCE of December 10th Dr. H. Carington Bolton makes personal mention of me and inferentially describes me as being an 'educated charlatan' and as having 'cracked brains.' He also says, inferentially, that I belong to a class of persons who 'wear their feather in their heads,' an expression that is not very clear to me, but I suppose implies something more and worse than the feat ascribed in popular song to Yankee Doodle. But, however, this may be, I presume that, as a matter of even-handed justice, space will be accorded me in SCIENCE for the following reply:

1. Dr. Bolton's characterization of me is either a simple expression of his opinion or a conclusion from premisses.

2. Opinions need to be weighed before acceptance. Dr. Bolton says that "Sir Isaac Newton dabbled with furnaces and chemicals in true hermetic style; and Leibnitz showed the courage of his convictions by acting as Secretary of an Alchemical Society in Germany," and, further, that "so eminent a chemist as Sir Humphry Davy did not hesitate to affirm